



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on June 23, 2011

Media Distorts Facts on Paul, Huntsman and Afghan War

Activists slammed a series of media pieces that blatantly misrepresented the facts about Republican presidential contenders Rep. Ron Paul and former Utah Governor and Obama appointee Jon Huntsman (left) regarding the war in Afghanistan. Among the culprits were the Wall Street Journal, Politico.com, The Atlantic, and Esquire magazine. The inaccuracies ranged from obvious factual errors to subtle distortions. But they didn't go unnoticed.



In a [piece for the DailyPaul.com](#), a website supporting the liberty-minded Republican Ron Paul, a blogger called out two of the worst offenders: Politico.com, a website that covers politics, and the men's magazine *Esquire*. The blog post highlighting the errors sparked dozens of comments from outraged and dismayed Paul supporters, who said they had dealt with years of "establishment-media" distortions and bias against the constitutionalist GOP candidate.

In the first piece, "senior political reporter" Maggie Haberman of Politico made an obviously false claim that anyone who follows American politics would instantly recognize. "The shift away from positions calling for military engagement," she [wrote](#), is "most clearly articulated by Jon Huntsman so far among the current candidates, with his call for a clear troop drawn-down from Afghanistan."

In fact, Ron Paul has articulated the non-interventionist position far more clearly for years, including calls to withdraw U.S. troops from Afghanistan. "I'd bring them home as quickly as possible, and I'd get them out of Iraq as well," Paul [said](#) during a recent presidential debate. "Our national security is not enhanced by our presence over there. We have no purpose there." Paul's long-held positions have been consistently articulated for decades in books, speeches, and even on the floor of the House of Representatives.

By contrast, "moderate" Jon Huntsman has been [anything but clear](#) regarding his position on basically everything — and especially Afghanistan and foreign intervention. "You're going to have to leave behind some presence, probably not 100,000 or 120,000 troops, but some presence," Huntsman [said](#) during an interview with CNN in mid-June. After officially announcing his candidacy earlier this week, he [told](#) reporters that he did not have "specifics" for a withdrawal plan.

The second inaccurate article cited in the blog post came from writer Chris Jones of *Esquire* magazine, who [absurdly claimed](#) in an "exclusive" that Huntsman "has already begun to distinguish himself in a crowded field by becoming the first to call for a rapid withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan."



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Again, anybody who has followed politics at all knows Rep. Paul has been calling for a rapid withdrawal from Afghanistan since well before the 2008 presidential election. Former New Mexico Governor and fellow 2012 GOP candidate Gary Johnson has been issuing similar calls since long-before most GOP voters had even heard of Huntsman.

Furious Paul supporters flooded the two reporters and their employers with e-mails and phone calls demanding corrections. But as of June 23, none had been issued.

"I guess you can file this away as another piece of evidence of why one shouldn't trust the media for the truth," noted the DailyPaul.com blogger who highlighted the embarrassing factual errors. "If they can't mention Ron Paul in these two articles, they are either ignorant or manipulative."

Of course, there have been countless other examples of similar distortions across the mainstream media in recent days. The *Wall Street Journal*, for instance, [opened](#) an article by claiming that Huntsman was "perhaps the most prominent Republican advocate of a rapid withdrawal from Afghanistan." Of course, Ron Paul is far better known than Huntsman. And he's polling much higher, too.

Similarly, *The Atlantic* [wrote](#) that Huntsman was "trying to separate himself from the herd by calling for a pullout from Afghanistan." Since the "herd" includes several GOP candidates advocating a withdrawal from Afghanistan, the *Atlantic's* assessment was silly at the very least. Plus, Huntsman never called for a "pullout."

Last week, conservative pundit Pat Buchanan [said](#) Huntsman was "the media candidate who is being imposed upon the Republican Party." Noting that the "moderate" was polling at almost nothing, Buchanan said he had never seen such an effort to build up a candidate. But despite the media blitz, Buchanan predicted, "this guy is going to flame out very, very early."

As *The New American* recently reported in [a piece about Huntsman's record](#), he does possess some impressive establishment credentials, including the fact that he was a member of the elite, world-government-promoting Council on Foreign Relations. He has also supported cap-and-trade, an individual health-care mandate similar to ObamaCare's, Obama's failed "stimulus" program, and other unconstitutional, statist policies.

But while Huntsman has distanced himself from some of those positions, the fact that he worked for and even praised the Obama administration is expected to be a big liability for his candidacy. And even though recent polls show that most Americans favor an immediate withdrawal from Afghanistan, Huntsman's timid waffling on the issue — no matter how much the media touts it as an asset — will almost certainly fail to convince other contenders' supporters to switch candidates.

Analysts have [noted](#) that the Republican Party's views generally seem to be shifting more and more in the direction of Ron Paul's — limited and constitutional government, sound money, and non-intervention. And while Paul doesn't always get the credit he deserves, he recently [said](#) he was happy to see other candidates espousing the same ideas.

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